

Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

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R 030635Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0747

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, XF, XI

SUBJ: VISAS: A-2 VISAS FOR QATARI STUDENTS

REF: STATE 181230

1. THE FOLLOWING IS KEYED TO THE REFERENCE:

A. EMBASSY ISSUED APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED (100) A-2 VISAS TO ARAB STUDENTS IN FY 75 UNTIL THE PRACTICE WAS DISCONTINUED. ALMOST ALL OF THE RECIPIENTS WERE QATARI NATIONALS ON GOVERNMENT PROVIDED SCHOLARSHIPS; THE FEW NON-QATARIS WERE LONG-TIME RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTRY AND WERE ON GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED GRANTS.

B. APPROXIMATELY THIRTY (30) F-1 VISAS WERE ISSUED TO ARAB STUDENTS DURING FY 75, ALMOST ALL OF WHOM WERE QATARIS WHO PREVIOUSLY HAD RECEIVED A-2 VISAS OR WHO WOULD HAVE RECEIVED A-2 VISAS HAD THE PRACTICE NOT BEEN DISCONTINUED.

C. THE POST GRANTS A-2 VISAS TO THOSE STUDENTS HOLDING A VALID I-20, AND AN OFFICIAL LETTER FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CERTIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT IS A GOVERNMENT GRANTEE AND THAT THE QATAR GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL COSTS OF HIS EDUCATION, INCLUDING
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TUITION, TRAVEL, ROOM, BOARD, AND MISCELLANEOUS

EXPENSES. IN ADDITION, THE CONSULAR SECTION MAINTAINS CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE QATARI OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE STUDENTS; AND IS IN A POSITION TO VERIFY, IF NECESSARY, THAT EACH STUDENT, WHETHER A NEW APPLICANT OR A RETURNING STUDENT, IS ACTUALLY A GOVERNMENT GRANTEE.

D. THE POST HAD BEEN ISSUING A-2 VISAS TO GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED STUDENTS SINCE THE POST WAS FIRST ESTABLISHED. BEFORE THIS, THE EMBASSY KUWAIT ISSUED THE A-2 VISA. THE POST DOES NOT KNOW ON WHAT ARRANGEMENT THE PRACTICE OF ISSUING A-2 VISAS WAS BASED; IT MERELY FOLLOWED WHAT WAS AN ESTABLISHED PRACTICE IN KUWAIT.

E. EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO CASE IN WHICH A QATARI STUDENT ADJUSTED STATUS. IT BELIEVES THAT THIS POSSIBILITY IS VERY REMOTE. QATARIS DO NOT HAVE A HISTORY OF EMIGRATING. THEY ARE FEW IN NUMBER, HIGHLY PRIVILEGED IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY, AND ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THE SAME PRESSURES WHICH MOTIVATE OTHER PEOPLE TO EMIGRATE.

F. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE HOST GOVERNMENT WOULD BE DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED IF A-2 VISAS WERE NOT GRANTED TO 5#EIR STUDENTS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PATIENT UP TO NOW BECAUSE IT BELIEVES THAT A-2'S WILL BE ISSUED EVENTUALLY. NEVERTHELESS, ITS OFFICIALS HAVE AVAILED THEMSELVES OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THE GOVERNMENT'S WISH THAT A-2 VISAS BE ISSUED. THE GOVERNMENT REGARDS THESE STUDENTS ALMOST AS WARDS OF THE STATE, IF NOT ACTUALLY "ITS OWN CHILDREN." THE STUDENTS ALL KNOW ONE ANOTHER, AND IF THEY DO NOT, THEIR PAR-ENTS DO; AND MORE LIKELY THAN NOT, THE FAMILY OF EACH STUDENT IS PROMINENT IN GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, OR BECAUSE OF FAMILY OR TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS. AS A RESULT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONSIDER THE CASE OF THE QATARI STUDENT AS APPROXIMATING THAT OF OTHER ARAB STUDENTS, EXCEPT PERHAPSTHOSE COMING FROM THE SMALLER ARAB COUNTRIES IN THE GULF WHERE SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAIL. MOST OF THESE STUDENTS ARE YOUNG, AND INEXPERIENCED. COMING FROM FAMILIES WHERE THEIR UNCLASSIFIED

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PARENTS MOST LIKELY DID NOT EVEN ATTEND GRADE SCHOOL, THEY CONSIDER THE TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES AS AN ADVENTURE IN UNCHARTERED WATERS. THIS WAS DRIVEN HOME TO EMBASSY OFFICERS ONLY LAST MONTH DURING A TEA HOSTED BY THE AMBASSADOR FOR APPROXIMATELY FIFTY OF THESE STUDENTS AND THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO PROCESS THEIR SCHOLARSHIPS. THESE STUDENTS ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY IN THE UNITED STATES, ABOUT INTERNAL TRAVEL, WHICH REVEALED

THE EXTENT OF THEIR INEXPERIENCE AND THE DEPTH OF THEIR
NAIVETE'.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT AN EXCEPTION SHOULD BE MADE IF
NECESSARY TO ALLOW POSTS SUCH AS QATAR TO ISSUE A-2
VISAS TO GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED STUDENTS WHOSE EDUCATION
IS ENTIRELY PAID FOR BY THE GOVERNMENT. THESE STUDENTS
DO NOT ADJUST STATUS; DO NOT WORK; AND ARE SUBJECT TO
THE DISCIPLINE OF THEIR GOVERNMENT WHICH
CONSIDERS ANY UNTOWARD BEHAVIOR OF THEIR PART AS A
REFLECTION ON THE GOVERNMENT. THESE QATARI OFFICIALS
HAVE REASSURED THE EMBASSY THAT THEY WILL DEAL HARSHLY
WITH ANY STUDENT WHO GETS OUT OF LINE. IN VIEW OF THIS,
IT APPEARS TO THE EMBASSY THAT THE ADVANTAGES GAINED
BY THE U.S. IN BEING RESPONSIVE TO THIS DESIRE TO WHICH
THE GOVERNMENT OF QATAR ATTACHES SO MUCH IMPORTANCE FAR
OUTWEIGHS ANY REAL ADVANTAGES THE A-2 VISA ACTUALLY
GIVES THEM. EMBASSY HOPES THAT A POSITIVE DECISION WILL
BE MADE PROMPTLY.
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